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ABSTRACT

This paper explores criticisms of how business (frequently referred to as management education) is taught at the university level in the United States. In response to these criticisms, changes in management education are being made primarily in three areas: interdisciplinary approaches, international business, and foreign languages. A comparison of changes being made at two leading business schools (the University of Michigan and the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania) is presented. The two schools were found to parallel each other in such areas as enhancement of the global focus, exchange of students and faculty with other educational institutions, team teaching and learning, problem-centered courses, and commitment to continuous innovation and improvement. The University of Michigan was found to be unique in having courses comparing how various countries approach business, and having language programs for students and faculty. The Wharton School was unique in offering the opportunity for students to develop cross-functional majors, using 6-week teaching modules, and having a pre-entry 4-week period for all first-year students. Factors that other institutions might want to consider in determining what changes are appropriate and practicable for them are listed. (JDD)

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Internationalization of Business Curricula

Major Changes in Leading Schools

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INTERNATIONALIZATION OF BUSINESS CURRICULA

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EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

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INTERNATIONALIZING BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Abstract

This article explores the current criticisms of how business (frequently referred to as management education) is taught at the university-level in the United States. A comparison of the changes being made to address these criticisms at two leading business schools (The University of Michigan and Wharton) is then presented. Finally, the problems other institutions might face in making similar changes are considered.

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF BUSINESS CURRICULA

MAJOR CHANGES IN LEADING SCHOOLS

Introduction

Since the end of World War II, most colleges of business have followed about the same pattern in delivering management education. Most of the undergraduate programs consisted of 120 to 130 semester hours of work. The graduate programs, typically the Masters of Business Administration (MBA), required approximately 30 or 60 hours depending on the institution.

The actual instruction was typically in the lecture format presented in the framework of one of the usual business disciplines. There were, of course, other methods of presentation such as seminars and business cases that involved an interdisciplinary approach. But for the most part, the "standard model" was used.

As the abilities needed by business graduates have changed and the preparation of in-coming students for university-level work deteriorated, the standard model seems to have lost some of its ability to bring about the needed educational accomplishment. For about the

last 10 years, there has been increasing awareness of the need for change.

Recent Trends

Recent trends have frequently involved a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to various topics. Some of the major approaches have utilized team teaching, research projects requiring the application of more than one discipline, business cases that cross disciplines, and business games requiring knowledge of more than one discipline. In addition, co-operative education and internships have become popular.

Parallel with the interdisciplinary movement has been the emergence of an international emphasis. The events of the last decade have made essential the need for international understanding. This international emphasis has also drawn attention to the need for American business people to learn one or more foreign languages.

Certainly, there is more to modernizing management education than simply putting more emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches, international business, and foreign languages, but these three issues are at the core of virtually all changes being made today.

To explore what is being done in these areas, as well as others, the rest of this paper will be devoted to comparing the changes being made at two of the leading business schools in the United States--The University of Michigan and the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Comparison of New Developments at Two Leading Business Schools

The University of Michigan

On June 30, 1990, leaders from academe and industry gathered at The University of Michigan to address the issues that have emerged over the last 10 years as the world has shifted to a global economy. The purpose of the meeting was to stimulate dialogue and debate relative to the relationship between business and business schools as well as mobilizing energy for action (Barnett, 1991, p. 7). The following two anonymous comments illustrate the urgent need for change. "Either we develop effective philosophies to bring current business practices and problems into the classroom, or we recognize that we serve only the role of historians." (Barnett, 1991, p. 5) "The U.S. industrial base is under siege. If educational institutions continue on their current path, industry

will also. It becomes an important national policy issue for the Business Schools to develop themselves." (Barnett, 1991, p. 5).

As a result of this meeting, the following key characteristics were identified as being among those that a globalized business school should possess (Barnett, 1991, p. 19).

1. Cultural exposure through international internships and student exchanges with other universities and businesses worldwide. Much more flexibility in terms of experiential course credit.
2. Language programs for students and faculty.
3. Comparative courses in all disciplines (e.g., accounting systems, personnel practices, and market strategies in the US compared to Eastern Europe, Asia, Western Europe, South America, etc.).
4. Teams as learning units to develop skill sets useful in global organizations; team building within culturally diverse student groups leveraging non-US students (as well as faculty) as country "experts" to enliven the cultural dimension of case studies.

5. New visiting faculty recruited from foreign countries as well as the US for collaborative research and teaching that enriches international studies.
6. Faculty development policy update: establish new exchanges between US and foreign universities as well as with global corporations.
7. Problem-centered courses taught by faculty from multiple disciplines forming partnerships in teaching; business executives participating regularly (e.g., courses on global customer service, quality, market share expansion, corporate ethics, international government relations, etc.).
8. Courses focusing on particular applications instead of generic skills (via exposure to issues such as culture, teamwork, information systems, and risk taking) for global leadership development. A curriculum designed to enhance global competence requires skill development in negotiation, initiating and managing change, coping with overload, self-management (e.g., patience, persistence),

construction of processes, communication, improvisation, sensemaking, persuasion, representation of complex systems. Curriculum redesign involves helping students to develop an understanding about five key bodies of knowledge: (1) the effects of overload and uncertainty on individuals and groups, (2) how knowledge is organized and modified, (3) organizational politics, (4) alternative forms of organization, and (5) the nature of interpretation systems.

9. Courses that draw on the interdisciplinary strengths of the entire University community: political science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, social work, public health, law school, engineering school, language department, etc.
10. Developing nontraditional teaching methods to teach the required "new knowledge" triggered by the globalization of business.

<u>The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania</u>

The Wharton School spent two years studying the need for change and drew on the insights of hundreds of alumni, corporate recruiters, CEOs and other executives

to redesign its curriculum to meet and anticipate the requirements of managers of the future. Following are the goals, concepts, content, and structure of its new program.

Goals (Wharton, 1992, Rev. 03-92):

1. To create innovative leaders who can make a positive impact on the practice of management worldwide.
2. To train people to "hit the ground running," while developing the capacity to work across specialized departments and lead diverse functions, people, and institutions.
3. To increase understanding of the changing global political, economic, social, and cultural environment for business, and encourage managerial courage and ethical conduct in making decisions.
4. To build on the cultural and educational diversity of students' backgrounds and interests.

Concepts:

1. Integration of the traditional business disciplines through integration of these functions through team-taught courses,

integrated cases, and integrative management business game, and cross-functional mini-courses.

2. Enhancement of the "global focus."
3. The incorporation of new areas of knowledge such as risk and crisis management, technology, quality, innovation, geopolitics, information, and leadership.
4. A commitment to continuous innovation.

Content:

The four major developments in the new curriculum are:

1. The in-depth rigor of the traditional functional areas is enhanced by approaching each course from a cross-functional perspective. This approach involves both team teaching and the team development of courses. Students also have the opportunity to develop new cross-functional majors as well.
2. New areas of study such as new courses in operations management; leadership, teamwork and human resources; and organizational design have been added to supplement the traditional courses.

3. New interpersonal areas such as leadership, ethics, teamwork, negotiations and communication--essential for managers who will lead corporations into the 21st. century--will be explored on an ongoing basis throughout the year using experiential tasks, simulations and interactive video.
4. The emphasis on the global orientation is integrated into every course and furthered enhanced through special programs and an international business game simulation. At the end of the first year, students are invited to participate in an optional overseas study tour which offers direct international business exposure.

Structure:

Four new structural innovations are incorporated into the new curriculum.

1. PRE-ENTRY: During the four-week pre-entry period (for all first-year students) classroom exercises will be combined with business lectures, team-building exercises and off-campus events. This program is designed to

ensure that all students enter with a consistent level of knowledge.

2. SIX-WEEK MODULES: The traditional two-semester courses are replaced by four tightly focused six-week modules.
3. INTEGRATIVE CASES: More use will be made of integrative cases and business simulation games.
4. INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOUR (OPTIONAL): Components of these tours include field work, visits to political, cultural, and economic institutions, and visits to a variety of business and classroom lectures in history and culture.

The first group of 135 students entered the new Wharton program in 1991. An additional group of 250 entered in August of 1992. Faculty and business groups will be monitoring and fine tuning this program on an ongoing basis.

Similarities of the Two Programs

The following lists of similarities and differences are based on the information that was available to the author. Since published information does not always include all aspects of a program, it is

possible that the lists may be inaccurate in certain areas. However, the lists will serve as a tool to point out similarities and differences in such a way as to be useful to the reader in considering changes at his/her school. The schools seem to parallel each other in the following ten areas:

1. Enhancement of the global focus.
2. Exchange of students and faculty with other educational institutions.
3. Faculty exchange with global corporations.
4. The provision of international experience for students through international internships or cooperative work assignments.
5. Team teaching and learning--i.e., an interdisciplinary approach.
6. Problem-centered courses that address specific problems as well as generic considerations. This is to be an enhancement of the traditional coursesnot a substitute for them.
7. Courses that address areas such as teamwork, leadership skills, coping with overload, managing change, self management (e.g., patience, persistence), etc.

8. Courses that draw on areas of the university outside the college of business.
9. Greater use of business games--particularly those with an international emphasis.
10. Commitment to continuous innovation and improvement.

The University of Michigan--Unique Characteristics

1. Comparative courses (i.e., the comparison of the ways various countries approach various business areas).
2. Language programs for students and faculty.

The Wharton School--Unique Characteristics

1. The opportunity for students to develop new cross-functional majors.
2. The pre-entry four-week period for all first-year students.
3. The use of six-week teaching modules.

Conclusion

Although the comparisons shown above relate to two leading graduate schools of business, they have applicability to undergraduate programs as well. In addition, the changes seem to be in line with the general posture of major corporations. Consequently, schools in the process of updating their curricula may

want to examine the changes in more detail to determine whether or not they are appropriate and practicable for their institutions. Some of the relevant considerations may be:

1. Does the school have access to exchange programs with appropriate foreign schools and appropriate foreign and domestic corporations?
2. Will the policies and financial resources of the school support the exchanges mentioned in Item 1 above?
3. Will the internal political structure of the school support the team efforts required for inter-disciplinary presentations and course design?
4. Will the budgeting and record system of the school accommodate cooperation between departments/colleges in areas such as student credit hour production, full time equivalent faculty consumption, and resource allocation? Although these areas are basically mechanical in nature, they can be significant stumbling blocks in a computerized environment.
5. Will the school's computer system support the use of computerized business games in the

volume implied by the expanded emphasis on this tool?

6. Is the "culture" of the school such that it will support changes of the magnitude discussed above?

There are, of course, many considerations that one must bear in mind when undertaking curricula changes such as those implied by the future needs of business graduates. The changes that any individual school might put in place would be influenced by the needs of its particular students and its ability to respond to those needs. This paper is offered as a list of items for consideration--not as a prescription intended to fit all circumstances. Hopefully, it will be useful to that extent.

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